

l'amphithéâtre Q1 de la Faculté des Sciences de l'Université d'Antananarivo. "Diversité de lémuriens nocturnes de Madagascar: Inventaire, identification des nouvelles espèces, biologie de comportement" était celle de Pr. Blanchard Randriambinina laquelle est soumise au Département de Biologie Animale et Ecologie (DBAE), Faculté des Sciences de l'Université de Mahajanga.

## Sauver *Prolemur simus* - 3000 cahiers scolaires "Godroka" distribués autour du CAZ

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Depuis la rentrée scolaire, l'équipe "Godroka" a réussi à distribuer 3.000 cahiers d'écriture "Sauvons le grand hapalémur" aux élèves vivant à la périphérie du corridor forestier Ankeniheny-Zahamena, à l'est de Madagascar. La couverture montre le grand hapalémur avec un petit slogan sur sa conservation, tandis que l'arrière porte les photos des autres lémuriens qu'abrite la forêt, notamment l'indri et le vari noir et blanc, avec les noms malgaches et scientifiques de chaque espèce. Les écoles primaires de six communes rurales ont profité de cette distribution: Fierenana, Morarano-Gare, Fanasana-Gare, Anivorano-Est et Fetraomby. La plupart de ces écoles sont situées dans des villages sans accès routier, donc bravo à tous ceux qui ont transporté les 3.000 cahiers vers ces sites!

## First community-managed reserve for greater bamboo lemurs inaugurated

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The first community-managed reserve for conserving Critically Endangered greater bamboo lemurs (*Prolemur simus*) was created in early 2012. The Ambalafary greater bamboo lemur reserve is now under the management responsibility of the Ainga Vao community association (COBA) based in the village of Mangabe, near the Fanasana Gare commune in the Brickaville District of eastern Madagascar. A three-day inauguration festival was organised in the first week of February 2012, attracting numerous local authorities and community members, and the final management transfer contract was signed on the 4 April by the Regional Director for the Environment and Forests (DREF) in Toamasina. Following the discovery of the site in 2009 during collaborative surveys between The Aspinall Foundation, Association Mitsinjo, the Madagascar Primate Research Group (GERP) and Conservation International (Ravaloharimanitra et al. 2011, *International Journal of Primatology* 32: 776-792), The Aspinall Foundation has been helping the Ainga Vao COBA monitor the greater bamboo lemurs at Ambalafary for over two years (see Mihaminekena et al., *Lemur News* this issue). We thank everyone who made the creation of this reserve possible, including the DREF-Atsinanana and his team, the mayor of Fanasana Gare, Lalaina Andrianavalona and colleagues, Paul Ranaivosoa, Lova Ranaivosoa, and the local authorities and communities who have worked tirelessly through the whole process. For photos and more information please contact the authors.

## Short Communications

### Conflictual behaviour in a lemur mother toward a dying infant

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Group cohesion in primates gives advantages in terms of detecting and evading predators (Strier, 2000). On the other hand, infant care is a high priority for females that have invested energy in the form of maternal care. When a female finds herself faced with the hard decision between protecting her infant versus following her group, she can experience conflictual behaviour. Even if we still do not know much about thanatology in primates (Anderson, 2011), simian species are known to keep exhibiting maternal behaviour toward dead infants, carrying and even grooming them for an extended period (Biro et al., 2010; Fashing et al., 2010; Lü et al., 2007; Warren and Williamson, 2004), though such cases in prosimians have not been reported. It seems that prosimian mothers are not able actively to carry a dead or dying infant (Nakamichi et al., 1996; Rosenson, 1977) and that leads to the hard decision of whether to stay with the baby or to follow the group.

On 9 October 2009, during a field study on ring-tailed lemurs (*Lemur catta*) in Bealoka forest (24°57'40. S; 46°16'09" E), an infant fell from the back of its mother while she was jumping among trees. Her behaviour was recorded *ad libitum* for the next 2 hours and 40 minutes, until she finally abandoned her infant.

The infant fell and climbed onto the mother's back a total of eight times. The infant was weak and probably injured, and frequently lost consciousness. The mother moved alternately toward the infant and the group. The group was foraging around 50 m away; the mother's mean distance from the infant increased from a few meters up to 30 m as time progressed. Every time the infant vocalised, she ran towards it, sat by and waited for it to climb up her back again, but never touching or manipulating it. As the time went by, the stimulus of the infant's peep seemed to have a reduced effect on the mother's behaviour, until she simply turned her head at a distance without further returning to the infant. During the whole period the mother frequently emitted "mew" (or "moan") (Jolly, 1966; Macedonia, 1993) vocalisations, known to act as contact calls (Petter and Charles-Dominique, 1979; Macedonia, 1986), and nervously groomed herself, a well-known stress behaviour (Maestripietri et al., 1992).

Most of the group appeared to ignore the infant, though two females and two males, at different times, approached to sniff or groom it for a few seconds. Two of them, one male and one female, were attacked and chased away by the mother. The last time the baby fell, it remained trapped in some twigs, the mother awkwardly grabbed the infant's arm and held it for a few seconds, then she released it, letting the infant fall down. The group had moved away again and eventually she followed it.

We still do not know how exactly primates perceive death; however, after the death of a baby, mothers often keep carrying it for a few days through to more than a month